REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9 are pending.

The claims have been amended to remove reference numerals and to place the claims in a format that is more consistent with preferred U.S. patent practice.

Applicants submit herewith a Substitute Specification that adds headings in accordance with preferred U.S. patent practice and corrects other minor errors discovered therein. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Shank, Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 5,401,205).

Claims 7, 8 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Keller (U.S. Patent No. 5,582,537) in view of Shank, Jr.

Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shank, Jr. as applied to claims 1-6, in view of Ulrich et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,752,685).

These rejections are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Shank, Jr. discloses a blasting apparatus for the working of surfaces of workpieces by blasting. A blasting material 24 is stored in a storage container 26 of sufficient size and is supplied from there to a suitable metering device 76 that is arranged directly beneath the storage container. After having been metered by the metering device, the blasting material is then transported with the help of an injection 78 with compressed AIR into a blasting means transport hose 12 that is flanged directly to the injector. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Shank, Jr. merely discloses a prior art blasting apparatus.

Blasting apparatus according to Shank, Jr. is referred to in the art as "overpressure" blasting apparatus and has disadvantages as described in the second paragraph on page 2 of the specification of the present application. One such disadvantage of the overpressure principal is that "high wear phenomena occur at the blasting means transport hoses. The hoses, . . . wear out in particular at a spacing of approximately 100mm to 150mm from the outlet of the blasting material to the injector. Strong flow turbulence occurs in this region that wears the hose

material abrasively even more from the inside of this region due to the blasting means transported in the airflow. This results in the hoses being so heavily worn even after a very short operating time . . . A further disadvantage of the overpressure principle . . . consists of the fact that the transport of the blasting material requires compressed air . . ."

The present invention overcomes these disadvantages by providing control means, such as, for example, a metering device, at the inlet of the blasting material feed for the introduction of the blasting material flow. Thus, according to the present invention, the control means is not arranged directly beneath the storage container, but is arranged at the inlet of the blasting means feed. As a result, the blasting means transport hoses, if present, do not wear out, because the blasting means are not transported by pressurized air through the blasting means transport hose, which leads to the wear phenomena known from prior art apparatuses as described by Shank, Jr.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Shank, Jr. does not anticipate claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable.

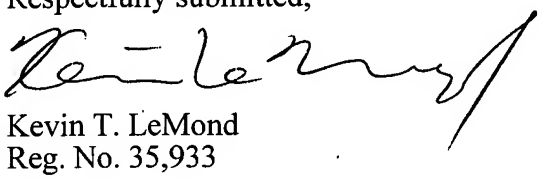
Claims 2-9 depend, either directly or indirectly, on claim 1 and, therefore, they are allowable for at least the reasons claim 1 is allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 415-576-0200.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments
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